

CND Paris & Brussels 2-4 May 2016

French MFA/MOD team

1. I gave my standard talk on the changing face of warfare and conflict; the Russian way of waging this warfare against us, and; a brief outline of the principles of Russian infowar and our programme to raise awareness of this and counter its effects.
2. This received a most positive response. They see the Russian activity in exactly the same terms as we do and have a most robust attitude towards dealing with it. However, they are operating in a different environment which constrains them
3. In common with other countries, there has been a loss of faith in democratic institutions ("democratic regression", which the MFA is studying). The French people are very nationalist, anti-American. There is also admiration for brute strength ("the Napoleon complex"). As a result there is a distinct tendency to admire Putin, coupled with a historic sense of closeness to Russia which makes them sympathise with Russia.
4. This is even stronger in certain parts of the French political class. They are not critical of Putin's kleptocracy. They see Putin as the only person to do anything to try to stop IS.
5. Consequently, there is no general public or political awareness of the spread or importance of Russia's influence footprint. There is no organisation like ours doing this educational process.
6. The conclusion was that they should find a means to provide funding to a French think tank such as IFRI to begin such a programme and to be a counterpart with whom we could work to get the message out. (BN to go to discuss details with them when the time is right)
7. They want to receive our product and ask to be invited to events we organise.

Francoise Thom, Jean Sylvestre Mongrenier.

1. They too see the Russian activity as we do. They see Russia's aim as to break the Franco-German alliance by playing on latent anti-German and anti-Merkel sentiment in France. The deep anti-Turkish feeling plays into this and is exacerbated by the immigration crisis. People are thinking in terms of recreating a Paris-Moscow axis. The 2 million Russian-speaking Germans could be a real asset to Putin if their support can be mobilised.
2. There is a certain admiration for Russia in the Army, which is focused on Africa and which has no concept of the need to prepare for war with Russia. The Navy has a much better strategic perspective.
3. They acknowledge that there is serious popular scepticism about Russia's influence footprint and disinformation process which needs to be overcome. But they think that the public is in fact very robust and that nationalist feeling (which the Russian propaganda plays on) can be mobilised against Russia. They see the real problem as the political class. They think our main target needs to be the parts of the political class and the security structures "where the

rot is". In the Assemblée Nationale the pro-Russia people can be identified (NB the vote last week on sanctions and the "friends of Russia").

4. No-one is doing what we are doing but there are people who see things our way and who we can safely involve. They will think about this and advise us, and put us in contact. First thoughts are:
 - Isabelle Lasserre, Figaro; Max Semot, Le Monde; Vincent Jaurent, free lance journalist, good on Russian money; Tornike Gordzadze at HEDN (MOD).
 - In Germany, Boris Reitschuler would be good to involve. He is good on Putin. The Baltic group in the EP would also be good to involve.

NATO Public Diplomacy Division

1. Very keen that we should identify and create a network of like minded people across Europe in NGOs and governments to focus on Russian influence and information. They have not assembled a list of such people in member states but will try to do so and give us the names and contacts.
2. They will be glad to support us. We need to tell them what this support should include.
3. NATO PDD Info & Press will take our papers and other product and disseminate them to defence circles and political circles in member states. Note that as an independent NGO we can do things they can't do and national governments can't do.
4. First thoughts as to possible people:
 - Ben Judah, on Russia and the City; Isabelle Facon; Nicolas de Pedro, CIDOB; Kadrii Liik, ECFR London; Borge de las Heras, ECFR Madrid; Jesus Nunez, Madrid.
5. Will link us into the stratcom world in member states armed forces. Specific invitation to go asp to Lithuania via Saulius Guzevicius to talk to the Vilnius Military StratCom Department, contacts: LTC Juris Žguts Juris.Zguts@mil.lt (Acting Director); CPT Tomas Tauginas Tomas.Tauginas@mil.lt (Chief Analyses Section); NCO Alvija Steponaviciute alvija.steponaviciute@mil.lt (Administrator)

Chris Scheurweghs and Bram de Smet

1. Set up the website before the June workshop. Demonstrate it at the workshop to get people to sign up to it and establish the network up and running immediately.
2. The workshop to be the first coming together of all the national teams we have identified and recruited. The workshop to generate a coordination process.

3. The role of each in-country group will be: (a) to contribute to our pool of knowledge by researching the particular circumstances of the Russian penetration of their country; (b) to educate their political, academic and journalistic communities by disseminating our material.
4. Potential to use former NATO ASGs, eg Jean Francois Bureau, who's wife's sister is married to Bernard Kouchner and whose son has a media company
5. The website needs thinking through and designing to suit our needs, plus the ability to evolve. Bram de Smet will prepare a costed model asp, e.g:
 - (a) Functions- might include:
 - An archive of information
 - The central hub of our internal info system
 - Carrying a map/visual graphic of Russia's influence footprint
 - Stock of material prepared for use by journalists
 - Mailing lists
 - Social media hub
 - (b) Structure- might require
 - *Drupal* content management system
 - Google analytics
 - A caching system
 - Hosted in the cloud
 - 1 Twitter a/c to start
 - Separate secure email system for the network (VPN)

NPA

1. Committed the NPA to working with us. Their role to use our product (including our giving lectures) to raise awareness amongst member states' MPs
2. Will circulate our details and material at their 27 May NPA meeting in BXL
3. Will attend our 11 May VUB panel on Russian support for extremist parties (which they are constrained from addressing)